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# Familiar Thought

*By Mary Ainsle McMichael*

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FAMILIAR THOUGHT

BY

MARY AINSLE McMICHAEL

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1922

DONE AT THE PRINT SHOP  
OF  
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Familiar thought it comes to us,  
In an unfamiliar dress,  
And with pomp we seat it in state,  
Where in rags it had sat companionless.

JUN 19 1922

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DEDICATED  
TO  
MY PARENTS





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## ISOLATION'S WINDOW.

From Isolation's window,  
All things seen are beautiful;  
Even the trailing shadow,  
Seems to be itself a pillow,  
Which of rest is all restful,  
Tho making sun-lit fields dull.  
From the heart of this meadow,  
Ever a soul sings its delight;  
Pray it may softly mellow,  
After Isolation's night.

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Life is a thought,  
So swift in passing,  
Its truth cannot be caught.

## MOTHER.

Oh, heart of suffering,  
With strength of suppressing,  
And sweetness still flowing,  
Whate'er is befalling,  
This is mother.

Who knows that in giving,  
She's less in receiving,  
And still goes on sowing,  
For tomorrow's reaping,  
Just pure mother.

## WISHES.

I wanted to write and to play and sing,  
When I was a girl.  
I wanted to be the girl in the ring,  
Oh yes, a great pearl.

I wanted a mansion, servants, standing,  
Oh, every thing.  
And in my print dress I felt silk weaving,  
No silk worm could sting.

I wanted gold teeth like mother's friend had,—  
I wanted them bad,—  
And when mother laughed, and said,

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

“When you’re old,”  
I wanted to scold.

But now that I’m older, roam out, and roam,  
I want just one thing,  
That honey in clover called home, sweet home,  
The only real thing.



## CHANGE.

She sat awhile with me today,  
Quaint Carmen of old Monterey,  
And spoke of things that used to be,  
The salvage of a summer sea.

Like mist at dawn upon the bay,  
Her pictures floated in display,  
And shot with unexpected gold,  
Their rarer beauty would unfold.

The custom house I saw again,  
Quick with the hum of busy men,  
And heard the laughter of a maid,  
Who lingered in its august shade.

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

In her arms Castilian roses,  
Pink and fragrant she discloses,  
And she offers one in banter,  
As a keep-sake to a soldier.

Lo, the breath of the sea belies,  
And the perfume of roses dies,  
Pleasure and traffic float away,  
And Carmen stands there bent and grey.

And in the town of crooked streets,  
Decay and death the stranger meets,  
Which to the casual seems to say,  
"As it is has it been always."

And history must recall,  
Or a pamphlet in an old book stall,  
As Carmen did for me today,  
The glory of old Monterey.

Such change throughout the world one sees,

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

In places once like busy bees,  
For chance but seldom turns new gold,  
Where once it was so manifold.

## A BENEDICTION.

Twilight with the rose of sunset yet on the sky,  
Which the dark branches of trees rest upon  
stilly,  
Summer's wind horn, which the leaves thro the  
day danced by,  
Stilled by the soft hand of night, majestically.

Night sounds, one by one, striking upon the ear,  
Like tinkling silver bells thro list'ning silence,  
While the Master of the universe, drawing near,  
Mutely asks of His children an acknowledged  
presence.

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

And those who know and love, reverently bow-  
ing,

His benediction receive like cooling dew sweet,  
And they in tried and hungry hearts receiving,  
Instinctive-gratitude whispered amens repeat.

## THE SUNSET'S MESSAGE.

The sky with flame was all alight,  
While dark the trees before with night,  
The grass a shadowed velvet lay,  
Unlit by ling'ring sunset ray.

A lullaby both sweet and low,  
Came floating from a bungalow,  
The music of a mother's soul,  
Which after years would gain control.

Where honeysuckle twined the door,  
I knelt upon the threshold's floor,  
And slowly raised my eyes to see  
The vision of a memory.

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

A little room fast growing dim,—  
Yet fitting well the vesper hymn,—  
Whose only touch of color fair,  
Was the glow of the woman's hair.

And footsteps told that drawing near,  
A husband claimed a greeting dear,  
While bending o'er the mother fair,  
To softly stroke the red-gold hair.

Which all revealed in tenderness,  
The message in the sunset's dress:  
A surety of finding rest,  
By making beautiful the nest.

## CLEARING HOME.

So many hours since dawn,  
I count them one by one,  
Hours gamboling on the lawn,  
Hours with sober thought spun.

Now near the setting sun,  
Almost I touch its gold,  
So near the story's done,  
Ofttimes my hands I fold.

The level plain before,  
With no more hills to climb,  
Shall I at all complain,  
That work undone not mine?



FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

No, on my lips the cheep,  
Of birdies gone to nest,  
So soon I now shall sleep,  
Upon my Saviour's breast.

## WARNING.

My own little girl,  
Your heart is a pearl,  
    More precious than oysters can make.  
So when lovers sue,  
You will never rue,  
    If you make them so value the stake.

And tho this is hard,  
'Tis all on the card,  
    At which good Americans aim.  
So make for the clean,  
If seen or unseen,  
    And hand clasped with God, stake the  
    home claim.

## TRANSFORMATION.

The day is dead,  
And the birdies fled,  
    To their nests in the high elm trees.  
From high o'er head,  
The moon's silver's shed,  
    On the world which the fairies seize.

And with the wind,  
They shift to their mind,  
    That metal so freely given,  
Till ragged edge,  
And each weedy sedge,  
    Has quite the beauty of heaven.

Oh gift divine,  
That can so refine,

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

The deformities of the earth,  
Can folk not find,  
Of the heart and mind,  
An alchemy of equal worth?

Stand face to face,  
And forget all trace,  
Of a wound and its bitterness?  
Yes, if we hold  
In our hearts, ten fold,  
The Christ and His unselfishness.

## HARDSHIP'S DIVINITY.

The hardest thing on earth to do,  
Is just to peg along;  
To eat and sleep and just get through,  
Too tired for even song.

How pinched the faces, how grown cold,  
The backs how bent with care,  
And yet the field has its own gold,  
And even gems quite rare.

Experience has it to fold,  
And paints with colors bold,  
And if we walk with her, controlled,  
We garner many fold.

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

Day-dreams, those moon-lit things,  
The perfume of wealth's living,  
Can hardly give what she so brings,  
To cleanse an all day's grieving.

With hardship's old grey thorny road.  
In bitter challenging,  
Thank God if of her soul, the load  
Uplifts beyond decaying.

## ADAPTATION, HAPPINESS.

I heard a birdie singing,  
Alone in a garden at night,  
It seemed to me defining,  
The true nature of God's sunlight.

For in purple shadowing,  
It was as happy and as bright,  
As though the sun were beaming,  
On a meadow of daisies white.

I bent my head to listen,  
That my soul with the song unite,  
When freed of all misprison,  
I was one with essenced delight.

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

And the heart of it knew love,  
Which trust conveyed in all above,  
To feel distant God drawn near :  
Adaptation's quenching of fear.



## NATURE - MAGICIAN.

Twin peaks of turquoise blue,  
Soft knots of atmosphere,  
They send to me a distant hail,  
That in my heart finds echo clear.

Green banks of pungent fern,  
Soft colors in the grass,  
Sweet singing waters, which I yearn  
To lie beside till troubles pass.

I hear the wild birds sing,  
I feel the breeze that stirs  
Tremulous leaves to whispering,  
And shifts the shadows of the firs,

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

Oh, ev'ry care would cease,  
My step grow firm and true,  
Yes, happy Joy know her release,  
Could I, far hills, but clasp with you.

But though I may not go  
Afar, be near to me,  
When on me sorrow sets her woe,  
And charge with strength the soul of me.

## RECOVERY.

I'm going back to hope and gladness,  
Though much of it is bound in sadness;  
I am leaving what I do not know,  
Nor why it was, or friend or foe,  
Save recovery is it's goodness.

And yet thro'out I have felt the blow,  
Of the honeysuckle round me throw,  
Essence of an old time homely fragrance,  
Life the half-forgotten cadence  
Of a lullaby I used to know.

Mother-soothing of sore bruises,  
With strength salvage for other uses.  
Ah, in illness 'tis day risen,  
Just to have attention's kindly leaven;  
But recovery—it is heaven.

## SUCCESS.

I would have success,  
So fought to excess,  
    But had only failure.

Against that stone wall,  
I let my tears fall,  
    But washed out no treasure.

And then one dark day,  
A voice seemed to say,  
    “Lovest, lovest thou me?”

And I left the wall,  
And followed the call,  
    Even to Calvary.

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

And now I have found,  
On overturned ground,  
Forgetting selfish needs,—

Enough and to spare,  
Of that thing so rare,  
The success that succeeds.

## A DREAM OF CHILHOOD

Where the green corn waves in the sun's bright  
    rays,  
And the sky dips down in a grey-blue haze,  
Where a farm house sleeps shadowed o'er by  
    trees,  
Whose feathered tops sway in the light breeze,  
There have I wandered in my thought today,  
To dream on a bed of sweet-scented hay  
Of my child-self in the wonderman's dress,  
Which never has clad the worry and stress  
That tears itself on the road of knowledge.  
Oh, mirage of joy would that I might pledge  
With you, for my waking mind, nepenthe:  
Or steep my heart in your simplicity.

## CONVALESCENCE.

I'm flying on the wings of the coming joy,  
And shouting with the vim of a lusty boy.  
Oh, the day is so bright with its great white light,  
Like the star of the dawning on Christmas night.

The dream that I followed when I was a child,  
Has come back to me with the wealth of the wild.  
The perfume of health in the breath of the wind,  
Cleansing is, as forgiveness when one has sinned.

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

The cloud of yesterday, which veiled the blue sky,  
Even mighty microscopes can not now spy.  
Bubbling o'er with laughter I walk with delight,  
Into the pasture of convalescence bright.



## WHO IS SHE?

Oh, bambino,  
Who is Nina,  
Whom you're always calling so?  
Is she pretty,  
Is she witty,  
Bird-like moves she to and fro?  
Does she love you,  
Buzz about you,  
As the bees the honey dew?  
Then bambino,  
I'll steal Nina,  
Just as sure as this is true.

## HEARSAY.

Hearsay is a wondrous thing,  
Building staunch on sandy soil,  
Making all the welkin ring,  
As it settles stone on stone,  
And you think you cannot fail.  
Hearsay comes with its great They,  
Sells the tale that makes you quail,  
E'en as tho fair truth belied.  
Ever great in little things,  
Makes an ocean with a pail;  
Loads each honey jar with stings,  
Sharper e'en than bees at war.  
Great it is, tho very small,  
And the tenderest of all  
Heartily desires its fall,  
With its noisome pot of gall.

**PARAPHRASE.**

**St. John 10-11.**

I am the Good Shepherd, whose life is for the  
sheep,

So I flee not as the hireling, but watch will keep,  
Tho I see the wolf coming to destroy the sheep;  
Mine are they, and for mine in sorrow I must  
weep,

Should an evil destroy even one of these sheep,  
Tho the hireling would flee for his heart is asleep.

I am the Good Shepherd, knowing and known of  
mine;

As the Father doth me I know Him, and consign

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

My life for the sheep, which, being of Him are  
mine.

I am the Good Shepherd, and I have other sheep,  
But not of this fold, whom my voice must wake  
from sleep,

That there be one shepherd and one fold to keep.

## IRRIGATION.

Thro the field of corn in the valley lying,  
The water is trickling it's silvery way,  
And the corn leaves in that freshness fluttering,  
Seem bidding in fairies for a May pole play.  
'Tis the grace of hot summer thro man's device,  
When Joaquin's plains shimmer in dusty sun-  
light,  
And California folk are clamoring for ice;  
'Tis irrigation come setting dull things right.

PARAPHRASE.

Psalm One Hundred.

Oh, every land and nation,  
Arise and know the Lord,  
And walk in joy and gladness,  
For this is His reward.

Be sure He is the Father,  
Creator and the King,  
And as His sheep then follow,  
Trusting in every thing.

Into His fold, oh enter,  
With thankful hearts and sing,  
Within His courts do homage,  
And proudly hail Him King.

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

A grace beyond all measure,  
And mercy in Him sing;  
The Father that knows no failure,  
As generations wing.

## CONTRAST.

The high sharp wind is calling,  
    'To wintry things cold and dark,  
And in its call 'tis moaning,  
    With the sting of all things stark.

From behind my window pane,  
    Glad in the glow of the fire,  
I watch the cloud for the rain,  
    And I wait not long desire.

It comes with a rush and dash,  
    And the bare limbs go humming,  
Under its stinging wind lash,  
    While tender things are shrinking.



FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

And beside the hearth's warm glow,  
The children in laughter gay,  
Are like the flowers that blow,  
In the flower month of May.

The pane grows white with the mist,  
While the storm yet is not worn,  
And the hearth's hard to resist,  
With its snow of popping corn.

Though it is not choice the best,  
When one joins the children there,  
For we know the higher test,  
Is to face the storm and its care.

## WHERE IS SPRING?

Where the wind in joyous pleasure,  
    Sets a-dancing all the leaves,  
Where the sunshine in full measure,  
    On the ground strews golden sheaves,  
Where the buttercup and bluebell  
    In the tangled grasses lie,  
Fresh and sweet as when the dew fell,  
    With the bright stars in the sky,  
    There is Spring.

Where the laughter of a lover,  
    Sets a-smile a heart in gloom,  
Where a little infant toddler,  
    Manages to cross a room,  
Where the children all a-dancing,  
    Shower grace upon the air,  
Anywhere if love be giving,  
    Joy to lighten one in care,  
    There is Spring.

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

For with starry night a-gaining,  
O'er the wintry one of gloom,  
We the sooner reach the morning,  
With the sunshine and its bloom.  
Then wild roses of the dawning,  
We shall prize you every one,  
And in that way go a-walking,  
Hand in hand, with God's own Son  
Toward His Spring.

## WHAT OF SPRING?

Buds and blossoms, leafage green,  
Skies in smiling sunlit sheen,  
    Lovely, lovely, lovely spring,  
    Will its promise riches bring?  
Or a-stumbling shall we spill  
This fair largess, blindly kill?  
    Oh, God grant us salvage sight,  
    In whose knowledge we walk right.

## ARMISTICE DAY.

A great shout went out thro the nation,  
The great shout of relief,  
And it shook to it's foundation,  
The citadel of grief.

And the awful and somber river,  
Of sodden tears and blood,  
Was bridged with the lining silver,  
Behind the war cloud's flood.

And across this beautiful footway,  
The great multitudes ran,  
And as children do in their play,  
They jostled as they ran.

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

Among them there was not one stranger,  
As every heart knew  
The bond of father and mother,  
And sister and brother, too.

Yes, each boy in the field of action,  
Was very blood of all,  
And loosed from palsied suspension,  
These folk joyed in war's fall.

And those in the trenches remaining,  
Knit closer this folk love,  
To each breast forever grafting,  
White roses perfumed above.

Oh, Autumn day of sad November,  
We thank you for release;  
We thank you for the wings a-flutter,  
Of the white dove of peace.

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

For the hope around the corner,  
Which by touch we now possess,  
May its better chance in time render,  
Beyond all sordidness.

## GROWTH THRO ADAPTATION.

The skies were blue but yesterday,  
Which now are dull and grey,  
And things which started laughter gay,  
Now fill me with dismay.

The busy world is going on,  
In pleasure and in work,  
While I must wait a morrow's dawn,  
Where trailing shadows lurk.

There's minor detail whipping hard,  
Attainment to hold back;  
To take the trick who claims the card,  
In courage must not lack.



FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

True, guns may cripple one for life,  
In some one line of work,  
But adaptation's always rife.  
And is a wondrous dirk.

Steel-like characters know hardship,  
Nerveless pig-iron have;  
And you'd come right, just take this tip:  
Work hard at what you have.

## THE FLAG AFLOAT.

The wind touches the folds of it,  
Caressing and retreating,  
Beauty developing,  
Gifting with a breathing spirit,  
Its every star and stripe  
Strength'ning devotion's gripe.

Oh, colors we so truly love,  
Emblemed are you from above,  
Largess of character.  
Remembrance reverence confer,  
Honor give there speeding,  
As truth finds there greeting.

Rank upon rank, we stand to the salute of it,

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

Citizens of each star there on the blue of it,  
Pure the truth of it,  
True the honor of it;  
With the sigh and the tear and the smile,  
Frescoes of it charging us the while;  
Hail the glory of it!  
Salute it, salute it!  
Our flag sunshine lit!

## THE EMPTY GLASS.

'Twas yesterday I heard them say,  
    Tomorrow will be grand,  
But today the sky is just as grey  
    As is the desert sand.

Yet birds are singing in the trees,  
    Their gay sweet wordless songs,  
And green leaves whisp'ring in the breeze,  
    In clust'ring happy throngs.

The empty glass I have not drained,  
    Rests there upon the stand,  
While my own glass all honey stained,  
    Is yet within my hand.

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

And so the emptiness I know,  
And other folk as well,  
Is just because I linger so,  
Where sunset bids farewell.

## CALIFORNIA, OH BELOVED'!

California, oh beloved'!  
Bloom of roses, perfumed air,  
In thy footpaths intertwined',  
Joy of enterprises rare.

Oh, the wild-wood, in the spring time,  
Knows not beauty half so fair,  
Nor has silv'ry brooklets chime,  
In its falling less of care.

While from heaven sunlight falling,  
Mantles you in cloth of gold,  
Comes the grand Sierras fresh'ning,  
From a nectared storehouse cold.

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

And the wide Pacific flowing,  
Brings a service all of love,  
That has kept your bloom unfading,  
As of strength from God above.

California, California,  
Hear us calling as the deep,  
California, California,  
All our faith is thine to keep.

---

**CALIFORNIA, MY BELOVED'!**

California, my beloved'!  
In your beauty have I delighted,  
As in mellow sunshine lying,  
You assumed a dawn like flushing.

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

And I've laughed with joyous laughter,  
When new freshness you would gather,  
Breathing deep of healthy ocean,  
Running in to pay devotion.

And I've smelled the breath of clover,  
As you drank the sparkling water,  
Vintage rare of winter's storing,  
From the high Sierras flowing.

Oh, my splendid lovely flower,  
You have all the right and power,  
Queen to reign over all the land,  
And you with social service stand.



## RED GUM TREES.

On a thread of vibrance hung,  
Glancing, gleaming in the sun,  
Grace of leafage bards have sung,  
When the breezes rippling run,  
Causing them to dance in glee,  
With a neighbor or alone,  
Leafage of the red gum tree,  
Slim and straight and upward grown.

Never have I heard them sigh,  
As the cypress or the pine,  
But in choral voices high,  
Sing they anthems superfine.  
When the tempest lashes high,  
Clouds in silver threadings all;  
Don't you reckon from the sky,  
A good hope they then install?

## DAWN'S GOOD MORROW.

Oh, wine of the morning air,  
From the cool goblet of night,  
I drink of your vintage rare,  
Face lifted toward the sunlight.

Night's silvery cloak of rest,  
Loosened and 'broidered with rose,  
Falling at the dawn's behest,  
Shows vigor gleaned from repose.

The sound of being pulses,  
And leaps like waves of the seas;  
Expectancy arises,  
Loos'ning possibilities.

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

Arise, receive the greeting,  
The Good Morrow of King Day,  
And thro the hours go reaping,  
Where others in ennui stray.



## AN OLD TIME BRIDE.

Happy dream of a lover,  
In the time of long ago,  
Whose tones were like the silver,  
Of a sweet flowing river.

Comes yet that voice of sweetness,  
As it did then long ago,  
And with its sunny gladness,  
How my heart begins to glow.

'Til neath the orchard blooming,  
I'm standing again a bride,  
On my ninth birthday morning,  
With the lover-mother, king.

## WAITING LOVE'S DAWN.

The night and I watch thro,  
To wait a promise true,  
Which like the morning dew,  
Will give refreshment, too.

The night should give me sleep.  
And gleaned' rest to keep  
My head above its deep,  
'Til morning bid me reap.

Oh, hasten, dawn of love,  
Come bind to trust above;  
Come take me in your keep,  
To the still waters deep.

## TO MY FATHER.

Father, as I think of you,  
Honesty swings full in view;  
Chivalry for woman kind,  
And a clear and searching mind.

Scottish mirth I used to spy  
In the clear blue of your eye,  
Sparkling as a brilliant star,  
In the frosty heavens high.

As in taking last adieu,  
Oftenest I think of you,  
Lying as in quiet rest,  
Folded hands upon your breast.

FAMILIAR THOUGHT.

So in peace the vision lies,  
Sealed unto all that belies,  
And I whisper once again,  
Good-by, father, and amen.

## RENUNCIATION.

Whisper low, love, whisper low,  
My heart knows all your sorrow,  
And my heart knows all your woe;  
Ev'ning shadows falling slow,  
Baby hands as white as snow,  
Folded, forever folded.  
Yes, all we've ever started,  
In old age is quite ended.  
Whisper low, love, whisper low.

Let it be love, let it be,  
As was started, ended be.  
As a sacred memory,  
Be of you and be of me,  
While we wait beside the sea,  
That ere long shall bear away  
Into everlasting day,  
All the good of it we know,  
For a unit there to grow.



## PURPOSEFUL WISHING.

I wish scarlet sin might be fastened,  
That the growth of hardness be lessened;  
And wounded surprise in baby eyes,  
Was not e'en like clouds in summer skies.

And wishing I must my wish impart,  
Lest of my sad tears I know it by heart;  
For deserts will show no traces  
Of the dew that elsewhere refreshes.

And so saying I bid you good-night,  
For after rest one comes on more bright,  
And when this matter again comes up,  
I may hope for cream to suit my cup.

— THE END —









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